



## POST RELEASE

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## Thank You Oakland for Celebrating 20 Years of Black Bay Area Business

OAKLAND— On October 26, 2023, the Oakland African American Chamber of Commerce hosted the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Business Awards Luncheon. Over 300 guests came out to listen to the stories of and congratulate the awardees, network, and enjoy lunch at Scott's Restaurant, in Oakland. The Welcome Address was provided by Oakland Mayor Sheng Thao. CA Assemblymember Mia Bonta provided a moving Keynote Address reminding us about the part we play in the community to live in the balance between the good and bad of Oakland. Prayers and the words of OAACC Founder Bishop Bob Jackson, as well as the soulful voice of Jennifer Johns kept the vibrations high and positive energy flowing in the room.

This year's awardees included:

- Kiana Gums, OAACC Board Member and Director of Engagement for the OIG  
Kiana Gums is a fourth-generation Oaklander, proudly serving her hometown as the Director of Communications and Engagement for the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).
- Ahku Mitchell, A.M. Janitorial and Maintenance Aid Services  
Ahku Mitchell started his journey over 20 years ago as an Alameda County Cleaning Technician, at the Wiley W. Manuel Courthouse, in Oakland. Today, A.M. Janitorial and Maintenance Aide Services has increased its profit margin to six figures and is the preferred vendor for the state of California.
- Feleshia Apps, Tiny Teeth of the Bay Pediatric Dentistry  
Dr. Feleshia Apps is a Bay Area native. She received her bachelor's degree in psychology from San Francisco State University. During her undergrad studies, she worked as a dental assistant before being excepted to Meharry Medical College, School of Dentistry in Nashville, Tennessee.
- James Copes, Old School Copes  
In 1987, Copes first coined the term "Oaktown" and released his "Oaktown is Kickin' It" T-shirt (which is still in print.) Since its inception to present-day, Old School Copes remains the oldest privately-owned t-shirt business in Oakland, and is a prominent street merchant found near Grand Lake Farmer's Market most Saturdays.

We were happy to honor Donald Lacy of the Love Life Foundation and present give \$5,000 to his Love Life Foundation. The Love Life Foundation is an Oakland-based community building organization committed to promoting life and saving lives through community revitalization, leadership and development.

Should you have any questions, please call 510-268-1600 for assistance or contact our President and CEO Cathy Adams at cathy@oaacc.org.

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*The Oakland African American Chamber of Commerce OAACC was established in 2003. We are a private non-profit organization whose mission is to advance economic opportunity and strengthen Oakland's Black business community. We provide a number of services for our business associates and members including access to workshops, business development opportunities and advocacy.*